



# *The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

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### Patrick Administration Co-Sponsors Workshops for Prospective Farmers *"Exploring Your Small Farm Dream" Helps Aspiring Farmers Test the Feasibility of their Ideas*

BOSTON – The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) encourages anyone who has seriously contemplated starting an agricultural business to consider signing up for "Exploring Your Small Farm Dream" – a four-session course set to begin February 26 in Lowell and in Greenfield on March 6.

The workshop is sponsored by DAR in cooperation with course creator, the New England Small Farm Institute in Belchertown, as well as the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project of Lowell and the Franklin County Community Development Corporation. Its purpose is to help future farmers learn what it takes to start and manage a profitable agricultural enterprise.

"Governor Patrick recognizes the importance of agriculture as an economic engine for the Commonwealth, and we are very excited to offer a program designed to pump new energy into the industry," DAR Commissioner Doug Petersen said. "'Exploring Your Small Farm Dream' will help aspiring farmers decide whether starting an agricultural business is right for them, and outline the practical steps necessary to turn dreams into profit-making reality."

Comprising four guided group sessions taught by instructors experienced in starting farm businesses, the February – April workshops will cover topics such as:

- Testing the feasibility of an idea before investing;
- The pros and cons of self-employment and an agricultural lifestyle;
- Markets for proposed products and services;
- Regulations governing agricultural enterprises;
- Risk management;
- Threats to success; and
- How to measure the sustainability of your business.

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“Exploring Your Small Farm Dream” will be taught from 6 to 9 p.m. Feb. 26, March 4 and 18, and April 1 at the offices of the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project in Lowell; and March 6, 13, and 27 and April 3 at the Franklin County Community Development Corporation. Each class is limited to 14 prospective farmers to maximize group time. For a registration form, contact Rick Chandler, DAR, 25 West Experiment Station, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003, email [rchandler@umest.umass.edu](mailto:rchandler@umest.umass.edu), or call 413-577-0459.

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